

Towards a Philosophy of Queer Alterity. Faith and Democracy

or a Post-Secularist and Anti-Fundamentalist Foray

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(W kierunku filozofii odmięcej inności. Wiara i demokracja,
albo wywód post-sekularny i antyfundamentalistyczny)

SUMMARY: The text is an intervention in post-secularist and anti-fundamentalist philosophy of affective alterity. It attempts to reconstruct the philosophical tradition of affective alterity and to construct a theory of it. Homosexuality is affective alterity, the other love of Thou and I. We explore dynamic religions in their openness to the Other. Emphasis is on Judaism and the "Love the stranger" postulate in the Hebrew Bible; we go back to biblical and rabbinical literature as well as Erich Fromm's and Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic interpretations of them.

The idea of hospitality, rooted in the Bible and the Koran, was revived by Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Griselda Pollock, and Geoffrey H. Hartman. It is of urgent importance in Poland where

fundamentalist misogyny and homophobia increase. In our paper, queer rights are examined as human rights - and this is again pertinent in Eastern Europe.

The methodology of the intersection of cultural analysis and Jewish studies here are inspired by Mieke Bal and Ernst van Alphen. The particular connection between Jewishness and queerness is stressed by Daniel Boyarin, Ann Pellegrini and Alisa Solomon; as we write, it is to be found in today's Poland in the Shtetldlech Iton Babel magazine, published by the younger generation. Also, the feminist studies of Maria Janion, Kazimiera Szczuka and Bozena Uminska are of significance here.

We end with visual culture productions: the queer or omni-sexual art exhibition against nationalist censorship Love and Democracy, curated by Pawel Leszkowicz in Poznan (2005), and in Gdansk (2006).

Throughout the paper we propose our understanding of love. The text whose part is entitled "Faith and Democracy" is a sequel to our Polish-language book Love and Democracy. Reflexions on the Homosexual Question in Poland (2005) with an extensive English summary. Our loves, our subjectivities are despised and disrespected, but created in art, philosophical research, and activism. Let us exercise (in) love.

Then as Now?

How is a philosophy of other subjectivity possible? Let us endeavour to reconstruct the philosophical tradition of affective alterity and to construct a theory of it. Homosexuality is affective alterity between Thou and I. In other words, homosexuality is love.

Love connects intra- and intersubjectivity. "In the beginning was love," as Julia Kristeva recapitulated the tradition. Sappho expressed the movements of subjectivity-in-love; in his *Symposium* Plato returned to the bittersweet Eros of Sappho. The Hebrew Bible depicted the feelings between David and Jonathan; in the Mishnah David and Jonathan epitomize lasting love. The word for their love ('ahav) is also the root for love in the Song of Solomon (John Boswell 1996: 136).

Explicitly, thought about homosexuality was produced by philosophers Plato, Denis Diderot, Jeremy Bentham, Sigmund Freud, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Julia Kristeva, Martha C. Nussbaum, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Didier Eribon, and Simon Blackburn. But the tradition is even richer and includes the homo- or bitextuality (on the notion: Leszkowicz and Kitlinski 2005: 142-150) in the works of Erasmus, Michel de Montaigne, Christina of Sweden, Hrihoriy Skovoroda, Friedrich Nietzsche, George Santayana, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Pavel

Florensky, Simone de Beauvoir, Roland Barthes, Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Judith Butler.

Nowadays lesbians and gays are Others, particularly in our Central-Eastern part of Europe; we are othered and abjected. The crisis in Eastern-Central Europe calls for sensitivities and subjectivities of same-sex love, visions and narratives of homosexuality, ideas and rights of otherness, lesbian and gay philosophical anthropologies - a democratic diversity in the philosophies of affective alterity.

The issue of minorities was frozen under communism. Totalitarianism crushed lesbians and gays. They were regarded as foreign bodies (Christina von Braun 2004) - to eliminate. Anti-gay hate speech and violence are on the rise in the here and now. A lack of differencing continued in the post-communist transition, as Claus Offe (1996) demonstrated. In our view, the transition is from pseudo-Communism into pseudo-Christianity, that is, from Stalinism into fundamentalism. The current homophobia in Central-Eastern Europe also encapsulates backlash to the values of the European Union, in particular its principle of non-discrimination set forth in the Charter of Fundamental Rights: "Article 21 Non-discrimination: 1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic

features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited."

Judaism and Same-Sex Love

As the Bible has it, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18: 1). Contemporary biblical scholars comment on David: "He is a figure of great charm, beauty, and talent (1 Sam. 16: 12, 18); a most pleasing personality, very attractive to women and men alike" (Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett: 342). A Jewish-Polish poet Anna Kamienska retells the story of David, who had scores of spouses and paramours, and experienced the other love in his youth: a liaison with Jonathan, a son of Saul. David immortalized this friendship in his Lament and extolled their communion, ranking it over love affairs with women. The intimacy between David and Jonathan was not love's labour's lost; it was love at first sight and they were men in love.

"Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18: 3) - John Boswell interpreted: "The two made a 'covenant' together - the text (1 Sam. 18: 3) employs the word (*brith*) used for a marriage covenant elsewhere in Hebrew Scripture" (John Boswell 1996: 137). As the Bible encapsulates it, "Jonathan

Saul's son delighted much in David" (1 Sam. 19: 2).

As explored by art historian James Saslow, in the visual arts David and Jonathan were depicted hugging in an "elegant" Gothic manuscript illumination; David alone was portrayed by Donatello, Michelangelo, Caravaggio and Simeon Solomon, whereas Jonathan in an academic classicist painting *Jonathan's Token to David* by Frederic Lord Leighton. Saslow added that Peter Abelard "could sensitively evoke the love between the two men: in his sixth *Planctus*, or 'David's Lament', he imagines David crying over Jonathan as 'more than a brother to me, one in soul with me'" (James Saslow 1999: 75) We listened to the voice of bisexual Sir Laurence Olivier. He interpreted passages of the Hebrew Bible: David's lament in the wake of Jonathan's demise. A Jewish-German-Israeli poet, Else Lasker-Schuler, portrayed David and Jonathan as one soul living now together on a star. The world to come promises a realm of love.

The Bible is being reinterpreted: in Genesis the tale of Sodom did not depict homosexuality, but inhospitality; the Levitical and Deuteronomic prohibitions did not refer to same-sex relationship, but prostitution (cf. the research of Robert Hanchett).

One cannot but note a link between Jewish culture and gay culture,

both subordinated to persecution and discrimination (Boyarin, D., Itzkovitz, D., Pellegrini, A. 2003 and from a different perspective Elliott N. Dorff 2003). Until today, homophobia and anti-Semitism blend. That is why Eastern Europe witnesses collaboration between the two communities, target of prejudices. In Poland the liberal Jewish community supported the gay parade under the motto 'minority for minority'; indeed the statement of Warsaw's reform synagogue Beit's board member, Dorota Szymborska-Dyrda, identified itself fully with Warsaw's gay Parade of Equality on June 10, 2006. The younger generation of Polish Jews initiated a cultural magazine *Gwiazdeczki Shterndlech Iton - Babel*. It warns against the anti-Semitism and homophobia in Poland (texts by Darek Galecki, Dorota Szymborska-Dyrda, and Pawel Pilarski), presents feminist and queer ideas (articles by Ewa Majewska) and goes back to the transgressive figure of a woman tzaddik (drama by Anna Cialowicz). The ties between Jewishness and queerness are stressed here.

Dynamic Philosophies of Religion

Unfettered religions, to dust off Henri Bergson's concept of dynamic religions and open moralities, do not restrain human rights; conversely, they are catalysts and cultivators. They defy exclusion and preclude discrimination. They spread the message of magnanimity, generosity and hospitality. It is not closeted

fundamentalisms but open-ended religions that are grounded on the commandment Love thy Stranger. The verse is psychoanalysed by Erich Fromm and Julia Kristeva for whose ethics the exhortation provides a stem.

As everyone is created in the image of God, the Levitical imperative "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19: 18) refers not only to one's neighbour from the same family or nation. According to Kedoshim "just as it is said about the man from Israel that thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, the same applies to the stranger." And so in Leviticus in the Torah we read: "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. [...] and thou shalt love him as thyself: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19: 34). No other command is repeated in the Torah more often.

In our Polish-language book *The Stranger Is in Ourselves* we stressed Islam's potential of openness to the stranger, of cherishing "the widow, the orphan and the stranger". The Koran proposes to "be good", "show kindness" not only to kith and kin, but also to travellers, strangers (Koran 4, 38). We also wrote about the Book of Ruth the Moabite, a story of recognizing and accepting radical otherness. The idea of hospitality reappeared in the New Testament.

The Hebrew Bible foregrounded the commandment to love the stranger. The prophets harangued against social injustice, exhorted to aid the disadvantaged. Thus was borne a munificence-oriented desideratum of the Enlightenment. Our time is not only littered with bellicose nationalisms but brimming with cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan ethics of hospitality, *philoxenia*. Philosopher Jacques Derrida titled his book 'On Hospitality' and feminist humanist Griselda Pollock invited cross-cultural scholars to participate in an interdisciplinary debate on hospitality; the panel includes Zygmunt Bauman, the most eminent theorist of multiculturalism, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an advocate of women's rights and Third World issues, Paul Gilroy, a British-Caribbean sociologist and Isaac Julian, a Caribbean-British gay artist. An all-inclusive cosmopolitan ethics (whose origins may be traced to the postulates of the Stoics, monotheisms and the Enlightenment) is needed. Magnanimity ministers to the other; hospitality welcomes and embraces alterity.

Love constitutes subjectivity - love constitutes life. Love and life are comprehensive, inclusive, inconclusive. Regimes' aim is to reject Others. Hosting Others constitutes ethics.

Philosophy is a quest (Pythagoras, Cicero) which is love. The very name of philosophy derives from a word for love, liking, fondness,

proclivity (*philia*).

Religion is a set of love acts (Michel Serres). The idea of hospitality comes from the Hebrew Bible, as recapitulated by Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman, and Griselda Pollock. Hospitality to women and minorities in Poland is what we demand. Kristeva defined hospitality as a human feature or THE human feature. Here and now homophobia goes hand in hand with misogyny and xenophobia.

Love "is happening, taking place" (Martin Buber): human beings live in their love. The name of the human and of God is love. YHWH, Logos, Allah is love. God is loving kindness (Psalm 51), tenderness (Psalm 114). Jesus of the house of David was a revolutionary. A soul rebel. He conferred with women, consorted with tax collectors and socialized with outcasts. He healed. He repeated after the Torah to love the stranger. He advised to love thy enemy. He had his beloved disciple - John. In his Gospel the apostle six times referred to himself as the pupil whom Jesus loved (*agapa, efilef*). Iconography portrayed them in an affectionate way: John's head resting upon Jesus' chest. John, the youngest of the disciples, also developed an emotional bond with the Virgin Mary. At the cross, "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19: 26-27).

A book on the Russian Orthodox Church provided us with the first insight into the sacrament of brotherhood. The reading of John Boswell's study *The Marriage of Likeness. Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* followed. It transpired that the Early Christian Church endorsed and condoned homosexual marriages. Until the fourteenth century the Church sanctified such relationships (John Boswell 1996). Boswell, a Yale professor of history, cites ceremonial formulae. Hagiography contributes encompassing evidence of saintly couples: martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, patron saints Polyeuct and Nearchos, bound not by biological birth but by a brotherly bond; Sergius and Bacchus, who, about to be slaughtered, intoned psalms in unison and prayed in joint supplication; united they were besieged, united they besought: bodies conjoined, lips synchronised. The Saints, Sergius and Bacchus, were summoned having taken marriage vows. The couple married "one another".

And today? In Reformed Judaism male and female rabbis who can be gay conduct a ceremony of same-sex commitment; they celebrate it quite often. The Episcopal Church authorizes individual dioceses to sanction same-sex matrimony. The Presbyterian

Church legitimises such relationships but differentiates them from heterosexual wedlock. Some Methodist ministers follow suit. The Lutheran Church opted for the official recognition in the foreseeable future. The Church of England, which opened priesthood to women, attempts more and more to embrace lesbians and gays.

Dynamic religions and open moralities, by dint of multifaceted reading of books, may lead from inner experience to the confederation of othernesses, culminated in the acknowledgement of diverse subjectivities. Inspired by the Bergsonian concept of dynamic religions, the philosopher Leszek Kolakowski declares that striving towards an open society, in which everyone's discrete humanity is observed and recognized and in which everyone is equal in respect of their moral obligations and demands, was initiated by ancient Greek thinkers, Jewish prophets, Buddhist and Christian saints; they all paved the way for universally human morality. These spirits do not command; neither do they domineer (Leszek Kolakowski 1985). Moreover - let us add - they are not self-styled sages, but seekers - women and men driven by love (*philia*) for lore (*sophia*). Women philosophers, prophetesses, matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Lea, prophetesses Miriam and Deborah and other wise women whose value exceeds the pearl of pearls (as asserted in the Bible); Esther, Judith, the female tradition in India (as chronicled by Ruth Vanita), philosophess,

prophetess and Socrates' masteress - Diotima (it was she who cast light on love), ancient Greek women (as interpreted by Jane Harrison and Nina Gladziuk), Pythagorean women, Leontium the Epicurean, Hypparchia the Cynic, Arete, Miriam-Koranic Maryam-the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Neoplatonic Alexandrian Hypathia, Macrina of Cappadocia, Fatima, learned visionary Hildegard of Bingen, beguines, mystics: Angela of Foligno, Bridget of Sweden, Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila, anchoresses: Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, philosophers Heloise, Christina of Sweden, Anne Conway (who authored the concept of the monad), Rahel Levin Varnhagen, Hannah Rachel the tzaddik, transcendentalist Margaret Fuller, philosophers: Rosa Luxemburg, Hannah Arendt, Edith Stein, Simone Weil, Barbara Skarga, Simone de Beauvoir, Maria Janion, Iris Murdoch, Agnes Heller, Martha C. Nussbaum, Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva (who writes on the *Philokalia*), Luce Irigaray (and the burning mirror of Teresa of Avila in her writings), Sarah Kofman, Christina von Braun, Elizabeth Grosz, Michele Le Doeuff, Maria Szyszkowska, Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, art historian and feminist/Jewish thinker Griselda Pollock, theologian Elzbieta Adamiak Scripture studies more and more overtly aver how feminine the concepts of God (YHWH, Allah construed as love) and compassion are; the representation of Jesus as mother (analysed by Caroline Walker-Bynum), the intertextuality of the Bible, of Song of Solomon,

Bathsheba's hand in the Torah (Harold Bloom's thesis), Ruth the foreigner, who welcomed Judaism was welcomed by Judaism. Femininity and homosexuality open themselves to dynamic religions; dynamic religions open themselves to femininity and homosexuality.

But the right to marriage is beyond the bounds of religion (Christianity deemed it a sacrament relatively late), and denominational institutions must not assay to alter the relevant legal framework. Religious pressure should have no bearing on women's rights. If a religion seeks to mould law, it changes into ideology. Religion is in the private domain. Hence our proposal, one that casts aside the fundamentalism which runs rife in Poland: to cultivate inner life (or, to practise the Athenian, religious, and, as we believe, Enlightenment care for the soul, *psyches epimeleia*); to care for the self (as Foucault synopsized the ideas of *History of Sexuality*) and the other, the others, the abject. To mother beings in their heterogeneity.

Faith and Democracy

Who are we? Are we human? We are bodysouls: biology and thought, nature and culture, sex and gender, sexuality and sublimation in one. In the beginning was bisexuality. Bisexuality is inscribed in all of us. We put forth that this is an interpretation of Plato (the speech of Aristophanes), William Shakespeare, Sigmund

Freud and Wilhelm Fliess, Charlotte Wolff, Helene Cixous or Julia Kristeva.

How to live together freely and creatively? How to find in us a love for the strangers? If we do not, we lose our humanity, hate and kill the strangers - again and more vilely. We choose, after Julia Kristeva, the idea of strangeness in ourselves: we are all bisexual strangers. And this is a remedy for xenophobia and homophobia. Love for the stranger, *philoxenia* is a work of culture through acknowledging the stranger in ourselves.

Philoxenia is the love for the other; it is no other than hospitality. We owe hospitality to fellow-guests of humanity. Such are the precepts behind Hellenic hospitality: the other is greeted, sheltered and catered for. Using their culinary traditions and individual preferences as their guidelines, the guests-turned-hosts concoct meals from fruit and vegetables. As a result of the right to prepare a personalized plate, an enclave of the other comes both into being and into view, which asserts the host's magnanimity and hospitality (Norman Bryson 1990: 23-24).

Monotheisms have a potential of openness to lesbians and gays. Ours is a queer and post-secular age. Cambridge scholars denominated their collected essays *Post-Secular Philosophy*

(Philip Blond 1998). Thought is no longer rationalistically policed: pondering is no longer purged of religion; contemplation is no longer cleansed of homosexuality. Religion and same-sex love? There is no one religion; there is no one homosexuality.

In our view, dynamic religions traverse from inner experience through the experience of the text to confederation of othernesses. Here, too, belongs a model of the open subject only to arrive at a proposal of an open body politic. Process within and without brings hope for a culture of cherishing the body politic of queer, cosmopolitan singularities. Democracy, a way of life in heterogeneity and plurality is to attempt a vexed task of cherishing subjectivity - bodily and spiritual.

Hospitality and love, inscribed in dynamic, religions are becoming. Love is in process. Love changes itself and changes us. Non-identical concepts of God, the human, and hospitable love characterizes the sacred texts. Dynamic religions profess mystery as well as generosity, sharing, help. Just as the sacred is unspeakable, so homosexuality is "the love that does not dare speak its name." They are both (almost) unrepresentable experiences. It is silence that brings meanings (Cf. Jonathan David Katz). Apophatic faith and apophatic love?

And yet, the Word, DBR, Logos are crucial. Here shalom stands for wholeness, the hale, healing, harmony, peace. Let us also remember the principle of non-violence in the Talmud. "Faithful to life and humanity" (Fromm), sacred texts oppose the idolatry of the authorities, money, nation, order. That is why care for the human has continued from Amos, Socrates through Lessing to Fromm (who conceptualized the tradition) and Kristeva. According to Fromm, radical humanism is rooted in the Bible. Intimacy and interiority are the realm of dynamic religions.

In today's Poland religion is monopolized by the institution of the church on which feminist Kazimiera Szczuka writes pertinently: "I must not grant the right to decide about my most intimate matters to anyone. There is not a slightest reason to decide about those matters for an institution furthest from the body of a woman and her experiences such as virginity, menstruation, pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth or abortion" (Kazimiera Szczuka 2004: 253).

Far be it from us to propound fundamentalism which has nothing to do with religion. In our view, there are projects of world religions that should open to women, be hospitable to the strangers, be they refugees, gays, unemployed, underclass.

Scholars of open humanities study our selves, sexes and scriptures in their bodily, spiritual, philosophical aspects. An example: the study *Self/Same/Other. Re-visioning the Subject in Literature and Theology*, where the contributors interpret the psychospiritual in the writings of female mystics (*Female Heterologies: Women's Mysticism, Gender Mixing and the Apophatic*), poets H. D., Sylvia Plath and Adrienne Rich and thinker Julia Kristeva. It is Kristeva who denominates Athenian lovers of wisdom, gymnastics and men (for this is how Plato's *Symposium* dubs them) *amosexuels* from *ame*, soul, and *amour*, love. Soulessual and lovesexual. I would say, then, lovers of both the soul and of love. Care for the soul is resuscitated in psychoanalysis, the analysis of the soul. Sigmund Freud propounded care for the soul, which he named *Seel(s)orge*, and which Erik H. Erikson calls patrimony of the soul. We are bodysouls. Proper to us, for we form them, are sense and sensuality. The care for the bodysoul is coupled with the care for others; performance artist Karen Finlay thus limned the critical gay art of David Wojnarowicz: a simple reminder of the care for the other. Ethicists recall the prime import of education, responsibility and safer sex. In-depth gender studies are conducted, among others, by Audrone Zukauskaitė and Arturas Tereskinas in Lithuania; women's and Jewish studies by Maria Janion, Kazimiera Szczuka and Bożena Umińska, feminist and queer studies by Agata Araszkiewicz, Tomasz Basiuk, Dominika Ferens, Ewa Majewska

and Marzena Lizurej in Poland.

Care for the soul and care for the others are Socratic ideals. Let us now invoke the Socratic warning: give no credence to majorities, have no faith in bulk. Or be cut to size, suffer the sameness of Ionesco's rhinoceros. Will we yield to the allure of unequivocal words and unconditional conditions of exclusion for women and homosexuality? In her book *European Philosophy of Law* Maria Szyszkowska writes: "It is uncommon for a majority to be in the right. The number of votes cast in support of a belief may not be a measure of its truth value." Statistics must not legitimise homophobia.

In the here and now, discrimination dominates. As Basia Nikiforova argues, in the philosophy of international relations tensions emerge where the rights of women and sexual minorities are disrespected (Basia Nikiforova 2004: 73). In fact, women and gays are dehumanized across many regions of the world. We need a new Socrates' Apology.

Queer Rights are Human Rights

In 1959 Hannah Arendt argued that the right to marry a person of one's choice is a human right. Today, philosophers Martha C. Nussbaum, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Jack Donnelly, together with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and United

Nations Human Rights Commission, embrace gay and lesbian rights as human rights and attempt to ensure that they are respected. Professor of the philosophy of law, Maria Szyszkowska, authored a bill of same-sex civil unions in 2003 and initiated a debate over it in the Polish parliament. Maria Szyszkowska's legal practice and philosophy counteracts the discrimination of homosexuals in Poland and endeavours to bring about the acknowledgment of their human rights.

We believe that at the heart of the debate on the legalisation of same-sex partnerships in Poland - and globally - are justice and equality. Legitimizing lesbian and gay unions would be heeding human rights - the rights of all human beings, irrespective of their sexual orientation. Neither heterosexual nor homosexual relationships are reducible to sexuality; there is also love, spiritual values, a bonding of personalities, all that is best in us.

Love goes beyond generation, age, and class (Franz Rosenzweig). Maria Szyszkowska included ethics in her draft of the Act of registered civil partnerships. The bill acknowledged that lesbian and gay partners are bound by emotional ties and argued that a legally recognized status is essential for the cultivating of the spiritual aspects of their relationships: "Article 4.1 Partners remaining in a registered civil partnership help and support one

another. They work to uphold the emotional bond connecting them and to deepen their spiritual understanding. They cooperate and plan a shared future."

Subject-centred law abominates discrimination; abhors violence; abrogates the hegemony of heterosexism, the chauvinistic casting off of homosexuals. How to incorporate gay and lesbian rights into human rights? The idea of human rights rests on our shared humanity. And yet human rights are at times reserved for men. Human rights happen to be reserved for citizens. Human rights are in many countries reserved for heterosexuals.

We believe that human rights should be maximally inclusive. Yet, nation-states often exclude sexual minorities. A cosmopolitan ethics could impel nation states to comprehend gay and lesbian rights among human rights. Human rights should apply to subjectivity which contains sexuality. Why is a heterosexual person entitled to human rights, while a lesbian and a gay is not? Is a lesbian or a gay not a human? Or is a heterosexual more human? Let us recall the ruminations of Sartre that no human being can be more human than others because freedom is equally infinite in all.

The tradition of human rights, from ancient Greeks to John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft, has not

lapsed but is rekindled in modern philosophy, with a resurfacing interest in subjectivity. Leszek Kolakowski remains skeptical about human rights, but many contemporary philosophers embrace and emphasize the need for a renewal of that notion; amongst them are Martha C. Nussbaum, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Jack Donnelly. Group rights, beside the rights of the individual, are being propounded, throwing into relief the question of identity. Despite relativist and regionalist suspicions against the notion of human rights, in our interpretation, following the "death of the subject," contemporary philosophy returns to the theory and praxis of subjectivity, humanity and human rights.

One is again reminded that philosophy is an act of quest, querying and - let us add - queering (*quaerere*, a Pythagorean and Ciceronian notion recalled by Juliusz Domanski, which encapsulates the tradition of metaphilosophical thought). When pondering human rights, notes Claude Lefort, one enters a labyrinth of questions. What are human rights? How are they manifested? Why have they been the crux of politics, culture and philosophy for centuries? Can they be identified with subject rights and basic values?

How to read and renew the ideas of human rights? How to open the ideas of human rights to us, loving beings? Human rights issues are inextricably bound with subjectivity issues in philosophy. After

twentieth-century experiences, contemporary philosophy is forging dynamic ideas of human rights, open to diversity, alterity, multiculturalism, gender, and queerness. To resist the temptation of totalitarianism, we realize subjectivity, cultivating human rights.

The issue of human rights for sexual minorities, the radical other in Central-Eastern Europe, including rights for representations and expression in the cultural arena, functions as a lens through which to view the condition of democracy in society and culture alike. How to include the rights of lesbians and gays in human rights? Human rights refer to our shared humanity. That is why human rights constitute claims to opportunities which foster the fully human existence of each and every individual; this claim of a feminist philosopher and lawyer, Martha C. Nussbaum, pertains to lesbians and gays: "I believe that the rights of lesbians and gays are a central issue of justice for our time."

There is no contradiction between individual and group rights. Although the tradition of human rights tended to be individualistic (Karl Marx dubbed human rights 'egoistic'; Karl Marx 2001: 127-135), human rights belong not to individuals only, but also to groups - and here our inspiration lies in feminism from Mary Wollstonecraft on. Injustice and injury to groups makes one demand a culture of human rights for them. Discrimination denies the

common humanity shared by all of us.

As a result of participating in Poland's gay visibility campaign "Let us be seen," we realized that human rights should be maximally inclusive. However, human rights have been traditionally tied to the nation-state where sexual minorities aren't recognized and protected. Cosmopolitanism could be a remedy for the nation-states' infringement of the rights of lesbians and gays. Human rights should refer to subjectivity, including sexual identities. Human rights are not confined to only one community, but belong to both the same and the others, 'us' and 'them' alike. An inclusion of each and every human being is implied. Our subjectivity is plural, equivocal and heterogeneous, and it comprises otherness: the stranger is within me - thus the cosmopolitanism of human rights mixes with the recognition of otherness. If we recognize ourselves as strangers - and this we expressed in our book, inspired by Julia Kristeva - we appreciate the strangers around us, instead of persecuting and adapting. The example of the stranger Ruth who accepts Judaism and Jewishness and is accepted by Israel is crucial here - as is cosmopolitanism in the Stoics and Augustine's *civitas peregrina*. According to Julia Kristeva, what matters is "keeping in force the universal, transnational principles of Humanity differentiated from the historical realities of nations and citizenship, [which] means, on the one hand, the continuation of the

Stoic and Augustinian legacy, and therefore the ancient and Christian cosmopolitanism, which finds its place among the most valuable points of our civilization; we have to go back to it and bring it up to date" (Julia Kristeva 1993: 26-27).

The introduction of the idea of subjectivity, including sexual identities, into the culture of human rights would alleviate the "expulsion from humanity" (as Hannah Arendt wrote of the situation of refugees; Hannah Arendt 1976: 177) which is still suffered by minorities. In our view, lesbians and gays are bearers of rights and entitlements; here comes the realm of our freedom. Lesbian and gay rights are human rights. The language of dehumanization which is often used against sexual minorities calls for urgent extension and particularization of the universal rights (notwithstanding Agamben or Zizek).

We believe that the pressing need in Eastern-Central Europe is the creation of a culture of human rights that would foster the public sphere of democracy and diverse identities. The culture of human rights must promulgate heterogeneous ways of life, open to the Other, and accept a variety of gender and sexual subjectivities; the culture of human rights must offer hospitality. We - women and gays - are part of humanity. But on the other hand sexual minorities should be recognized in their difference and entitled to it.

Our loves, our subjectivities - despised and disrespected, but created in art and philosophical research as activism.

Love and Democracy

One is again reminded that homosexuality is love. Love is never realized, always to be, to become. It is a lived-living, inner-outer experience. Love combines the body and thought, nature and freedom, corporeality and creativity.

The absence-presence of homotextuality in Central-Eastern Europe is telling, crying out: Juliusz Slowacki, Nikolai Gogol, Lesya Ukrayinka, Narcyza Zmichowska, Marina Tsvetaeva and Sophia Parnok, Sergei Esenin, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Jiri Karasek ze Lvovic, Gennady Trifonov, Witold Gombrowicz, Jiri Langer, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Grzegorz Musiał, Bara Basikova, Izabela Filipiak, and Michał Witkowski. Homovisuality is even stronger. To embody our ideas of affective alterity, we devised an exhibition of contemporary art entitled *Love and Democracy*. Love - and art - binds sense and the senses. Subjectivity is created in love and art. Included in the exhibition were works by Dorota Nieznalska, an artist censored, sued and sentenced in Poland to six months of the restriction of freedom. Art representing a pluralism of love was authored by Izabela Gustowska, Piotr Nathan, Adrien Sina, Wojciech Gilewicz, Bogna Burska, Karol Radziszewski, Justyna

Apolinarzak, Tomasz Kozak, and initiator of lesbian and gay visibility campaign *Let them see us*, Karolina Bregula. Our project in the show was a series of sound and photo installations *We are all born bisexual*. It is our hope that in the future editions of the exhibition Svajone and Paulius Stanikai will show their work: the abject, sexuality, and sublimation. We also count on a Polish and international artist and writer, Ewa Kuryluk, who presents her *Luftmenschen* of memory, absence, and as we understand it, sense and sensuality.

"Resentment, our daily lot, is opaque, exacting. The amorous state, on the contrary, allows us to dream another subjectivity: one which combines affect and ideals, the 'ego and the other' and, from these assumed contradictions, fashions open systems capable of innovation. Which is to say, of life" (Julia Kristeva in Lisa Appignanesi 1984: 21).

Let us exercise (in) love. Hatred has no last word.

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